



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK

**U.S. ATTORNEY PRESENTS NEW CRYSTAL KIPPER & ALI KEMP
MEMORIAL AWARD TO PLATTE COUNTY SHERIFF**

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that Platte County Sheriff Richard Anderson and the Platte County Sheriff's Department were honored today as the first recipients of the Crystal Kipper & Ali Kemp Memorial Award.

The new award is being presented during National Crime Victims' Rights Week. "By honoring two young crime victims whose deaths profoundly touched us all," Graves said, "we pay our respect to all victims of crime, as well as recognizing those who work diligently to prevent the exploitation of children."

Crystal Kipper was an 18-year-old Gladstone, Mo., resident who was murdered after her car broke down on Interstate 29, just north of Platte City, on Feb. 24, 1997. Law enforcement officials identified John E. Williams as the primary suspect after he was arrested in a separate case, for which he was later convicted. But Williams committed suicide a few days before Graves, who was then Platte County Prosecuting Attorney, planned to file first-degree murder charges. Kipper's body was never found.

Ali Kemp was a 19-year-old Blue Valley North High School graduate who was murdered on June 18, 2002, while she worked at the Foxborough neighborhood swimming pool in Leawood, Kan. The investigation into her death is still open, but no arrests have been made.

The parents of Kipper and Kemp participated in today's presentation of the first annual Crystal Kipper & Ali Kemp Memorial Award to Platte County Sheriff Richard Anderson and the Platte County Sheriff's Department.

"We can't turn back the clock to erase the tragedy suffered by victims of crimes," Graves said. "What we can do – what we are committed to doing – is to pursue justice on their behalf."

Unfortunately, even the best effort of law enforcement sometimes isn't enough and victims suffer when crimes go unpunished. But that doesn't mean they are forgotten. This annual award is intended to be a small reminder of both the value of justice and the pain shared by victims of crime."

Each year during National Crime Victims' Rights Week, the Crystal Kipper & Ali Kemp Memorial Award will be presented in recognition of an extra step taken to stop those who would harm or exploit children. "That is my highest priority," said Graves, "and this award will honor those who share that conviction and work diligently on behalf of our most vulnerable citizens – children."

Sheriff Anderson recently announced the formation of the Cyber Crimes Initiative, which will target Internet crimes against children. A priority of this initiative is to investigate and arrest those who attempt to exploit children via the Internet, particularly those who travel to the area to meet them for sex. The Cyber Crimes Initiative also investigates child pornography cases.

"Just as the Kipper and Kemp cases highlight the need to protect children from criminals who prowl on our highways and in our neighborhoods," Graves said, "Platte County's Cyber Crimes Initiative reminds us that Internet predators can invade our homes through the open door of the Internet."

Graves praised the Cyber Crimes Initiative for its early success. Five cases have already been accepted for review for federal prosecution.

"I know first-hand the difficulty of investigating and prosecuting these types of cases," Graves added. "Internet predators don't recognize jurisdictions or geographic boundaries, and they take advantage of the relative anonymity of cyberspace. We all recognize the horrendous nature of these crimes, and we all agree that more can and should be done to prevent them. Sheriff Anderson and his department have stepped forward, taking it upon themselves to aggressively attack this growing threat to children.

"Sheriff Anderson's Cyber Crimes Initiative is an ambitious undertaking that has already yielded impressive results. Fewer children will fall prey to Internet predators as a result of this initiative."

"In recognition of the laudable work on behalf of protecting children, I would like to personally thank Sheriff Anderson, and present him and his department with the first annual Crystal Kipper & Ali Kemp Memorial Award."

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

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